

In the TESTS tabbed section of my MEDICAL NOTEBOOK are worksheets listing all tests, imaging, operations/procedures, and inoculations (shots). Completing this section after each “test” is part of my **clinical closing ceremony**, followed immediately by writing detailed notes in my tabbed section NOTES & NS (next action steps). Finally I put any new “test” or follow-up action on my calendar. If my next clinic should be in six months, for example, I mark a date to call the clinical scheduler. Or, I might mark the date when a clinician is supposed to call me or a week during which I need bloodwork and should watch the mail for orders to hand to a lab.

Use one worksheet (print out Page 2) for each natural grouping of tests/procedures

Like me, you may find yourself adding or eliminating worksheets over time as your body changes. Below are my working sections and one example that I eliminated.

1. **Blood:** All blood tests—routine, special needs, blood thinner INR tests/results, etc.
2. **Bone density/endocrinology:** Transplant medications can weaken bone density.
3. **Cardiac:** Open-heart surgeries, biopsies, electrocardiograms, echocardiograms, etc.
4. **EP:** *Pre-transplant*, a deadly arrhythmia required lots of monitoring by electrophysiology specialists, so I tracked that separate from general cardiac monitoring. Section gone now!
5. **Dental:** Cardiac patients require more frequent cleanings and check-ups.
6. **GI:** Colonoscopies check for cancer. Also, over time our transplant meds can complicate the GI tract.
7. **GYN:** Heart transplant graduates are vulnerable to cancers of the breast and uterus, so I keep all my girl stuff on one worksheet; for example, PAPs, colposcopies, mammograms.
8. **ID/Shots:** Suppressed immune systems are vulnerable to infectious diseases, thus you need pneumonia, influenza, and tetanus inoculations among others, especially if you travel.
9. **Skin:** Fair-skinned and immunosuppressed, I am checked every 6 months for skin cancers.
10. **Surgeries:** Note on this worksheet any surgery that does not fit within the categories above.
11. **Other:** A catch-all sheet. Some one-offs on my sheet later became their own category.

Why do the worksheet entries begin with “What” and not the date?

A frequent question you and your clinicians will have is: “When was your last biopsy?” “When was your last pneumonia shot?” I found that listing the name of the test/procedure *before* its date makes the chart easier to skim for the test/procedure.

EXAMPLE FROM MY CARDIAC WORKSHEET HISTORY

echo	5/7	70% EF!!!!	“remarkable” great ejection fraction!!!
groin biopsy-1	8/9	no rej!	1st annual. NS: See Notes&MGH dischg. sheet.
echo	8/10	71% EF	Holding! docs happy
neck biopsy	11/28	no rej!	Emergency. No CMU cells. All ok. Phew.

TESTS, PROCEDURES, SHOTS

2 of 2

CATEGORY